

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 02496 250851Z
ACTION EA-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 250740Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8683
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 02496

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, MOPS, MY, TH
SUBJECT: THAI-MALAYSIA MILITARY OPERATIONS

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 0513

1. RATTANA YAWAPRAPHAT IS A WELL-KNOWN, OUTSPOKEN AND OFTEN OPINIONATED JOURNALIST. THE NEWSPAPER FOR WHICH HE WRITES, SIANG PUANGCHON (VOICE OF THE PEOPLE), HAS NO CONSISTENT POLITICAL COLORING AND IS NOW CONSIDERED GENERALLY MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD, ALTHOUGH IT FORMERLY WAS CONSIDERED "LEFTIST."

2. IN EMBASSY'S JUDGMENT, GENERAL POPULATION DOES NOT HOLD STRONG VIEWS ON MALAYSIAN-THAI JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS. STRONG OPPOSITION TO MALAYSIAN TROOPS OPERATING ON THAI SOIL HAS BEEN VOICED IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, AND RESULTED IN THE TERMINATION OF MALAYSIAN ANTI-CPM OPERATIONS IN THE BORDER AREA IN MAY, 1976. WITHIN THAI MILITARY CIRCLES THERE IS RELUCTANCE TO RISK TOO MANY RESOURCES IN BATTLES AGAINST THE CPM AND A LATENT
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DISTRUST OF MALAYSIAN INTENTIONS TOWARD MUSLIM SEPARATISTS IN SOUTH THAILAND. NEVERTHELESS, THE THAI HAVE GONE FORWARD WITH THESE JOINT OPERATIONS IN THE PAST YEAR, AND WE EXPECT THEY WILL CONTINUE UNDER THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

3. POPULAR REACTION TO THE JOINT OPERATIONS WILL

PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE MINIMAL WITH MIXED OPPOSITION
AND SUPPORT IN THE THAI PRESS UNLESS SOME UNTOWARD
INCIDENT INVOLVING MALAYSIAN TROOPS INCITES PUBLIC
OPINION AGAINST THE PRESENCE OF MALAYSIAN SOLDIERS IN
THAI TERRITORY.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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